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BREEDS OF LIGHT HORSES



THIS BULLETIN gives concise information regarding breeds of light horses and will be particularly useful to farmers in sections where light horses are preeminently fitted for farm work, such as mountainous and hilly sections and where there are markets for horses for saddle and driving purposes.

The breeds discussed are the Arabian, Thoroughbred, Standardbred, American Saddle Horse, Morgan, Hackney, French Coach, German Coach, and Cleveland Bay. Of these, the Standardbred, American Saddle Horse, and Morgan breeds were developed in this country. The origin, development, general appearance, and adaptability of the light breeds are discussed.

There is no best breed of light horses. Some breeds are superior to others in certain respects, and one breed may be better adapted to certain local conditions than another. The general requirements for a section and the popularity of a certain breed in a locality should receive the utmost consideration in choosing a breed.

BREEDS OF LIGHT HORSES

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CHARACTERISTICS OF LIGHT HORSES

LIGHT horses are a class intermediate in size between ponies and draft horses. Usually they have more range, also better action and greater speed than ponies or draft horses. A majority of light horses are from 15 to 16 hands² high and weigh from 900 to 1,250 pounds. Breeds of light horses, then, refer to the groups within this class which have been bred pure for a particular purpose, individual ancestry having been recorded by a registry association.

Light horses are well adapted to mountainous sections and rolling land, where they are useful for farm horse-power and for riding and driving purposes. It is in such sections that light horses should be bred and developed to supply the home demand.

The material presented herewith is intended to convey to the reader concise general information concerning the characteristics of the various breeds of light horses commonly found in this country. It is interesting to note the extent to which Arabian and Thoroughbred bloods were used in founding many of the light breeds. This relationship is briefly touched upon, but no attempt is made to give detailed information concerning early breed history. By communicating with the secretaries of the various breed associations, whose names are given, information regarding rules of registration, issuance of studbooks, and lists of breeders may be obtained.

ARABIAN

The oldest breed of horses generally recognized and the fountain-head of all our other light breeds was developed in the desert country of Arabia, from which it derives its name. Needing an animal that would carry him swiftly and safely over long stretches of sandy soil and at the same time withstand lack of feed and water to a remarkable degree, the Arab developed a type of horse that has long been noted for its activity, endurance, docility, and handsome appearance.

¹ A revision of former editions by H. H. Reese, who resigned in 1926.

² A hand is a measurement of height equal to 4 inches.

The Arabian horse (fig.1), while primarily developed as a saddle horse and ridden by the Arabs at a canter, is easily broken to make a safe although not fast driver. He possesses the general characteristics desired in a saddle horse, viz, good carriage of head and neck; deep, well-sloped shoulders; a short back with proportionately long underline; wide and deep quarters; short, strong loin; tail attached high; compactness of middle; and superior quality of underpinning without any tendency to appear leggy.

A typical Arabian horse has a wedge-shaped head; small nose; dish face; deep, wide jaws; eyes set low, wide apart, and near the middle of the head; a relatively large brain capacity; one less lumbar vertebra than most other horses, giving a short, weight-carrying back; one or two fewer vertebrae in the tail, which is set on a high

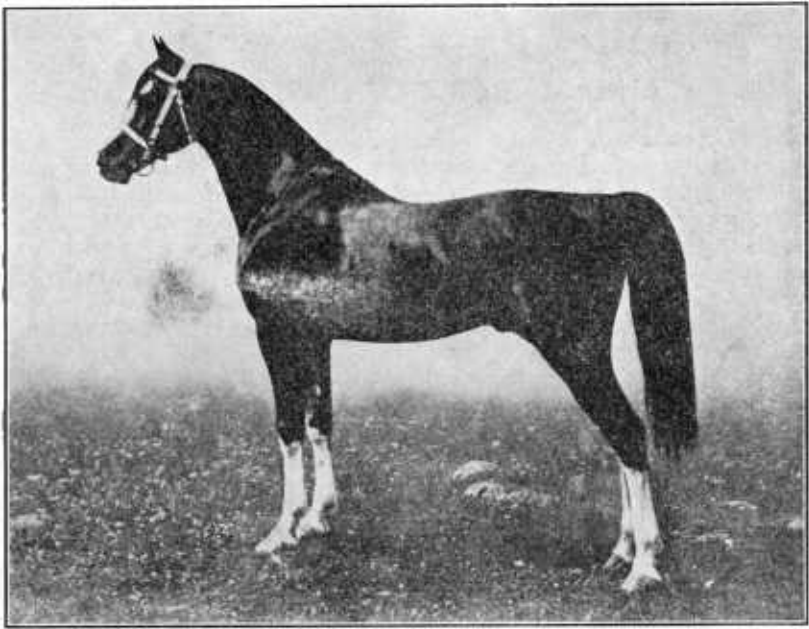


FIGURE 1.—Arabian stallion.

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croup and gaily carried; ribs sprung wide and deep; large knee, hock, tendon, and hoof; dense bone; small stomach capacity, with small feed requirement and the ability to assimilate rough feed; and a marked prepotency in the stud.

Generally the Arabian horse in action shows only the walk, trot, and canter. The usual height is 14 to 15 hands and the weight from 800 to 1,000 pounds. Bay, gray, chestnut, and brown are the predominating colors, with an occasional white or black. White marks on the head and legs are common, but purebred Arabians are never piebald or spotted, notwithstanding an erroneous impression created by circus horses that are commonly called Arabians.

Crossed on farm mares, Arabian stallions have produced excellent saddle horses, but they frequently lack size when measured by present-day requirements. However, admirers of the Arabian are very en-

thusiastic about its suitability for cavalry use, pointing out that endurance and weight-carrying ability, as demonstrated in endurance tests, even temperament, and especially ability to withstand hardships, such as scanty feed on long marches, make it especially useful for this purpose.

The Arabian Horse Club of America, Alfred R. Watt, secretary, Barrington, Ill., publishes a studbook, the latest supplement (1939) to which shows a total of 1,182 registrations of animals living and dead.

THOROUGHBRED

The name "Thoroughbred" is applied properly only to the breed of running race horses produced originally in England. Three Arabian stallions are credited with having laid the foundation for this



FIGURE 2.—Thoroughbred stallion.

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breed—The Byerly Turk, The Darley Arabian, and The Godolphin Barb. They produced the three famous racing families, Herod, Eclipse, and Matchem, respectively. The Thoroughbred has many features of the Arabian, most notable of which is the general refinement, or "breediness" of appearance. The cross on English mares, however, and selection for running speed have resulted in the Thoroughbred's being faster at the run, larger, and commonly more angular and upstanding than the Arabian. As a running race horse the Thoroughbred is without a peer. The canter is its best utility gait. Many specimens have a splendid walk, and the trot, while not showing extreme speed or knee action, is nevertheless often desirable for saddle use. Rather wide variations in height and weight are found among horses of this breed. Many representative stallions, however, stand between 15.1 and 16.2 hands high and weigh between 1,000 and 1,150

pounds, but mares are generally smaller in both respects. Thoroughbreds are bay, brown, chestnut, black, or, less frequently, gray. Irregular and conspicuous white marks are not uncommon. A Thoroughbred stallion is shown in figure 2.

Thoroughbreds are bred pure almost entirely for racing purposes, a certificate of registration with the Jockey Club being required for horses entered in races on the larger tracks in the United States. To instill quality and a more active temperament, animals of this breed are sometimes used to cross with other breeds. The use of Thoroughbred sires on mares of other than pure Thoroughbred blood is quite popular in certain sections, the resultant animals being commonly termed half-breds. Such horses find ready sale as hunters, saddle horses, and polo ponies. Many excellent officers' horses and cavalry horses are produced in this way. When of proper temperament and of sufficient size, they have also been very satisfactory for general farm work on rolling land, gaining for themselves a reputation for stamina and endurance.

The Jockey Club, of which Fred J. E. Klees, 250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y., is registrar, registers Thoroughbreds in the United States, more than 165,000 animals having been recorded. Most of our imported Thoroughbreds come from France and England, but horses of this breed are bred in other countries as well and are widely distributed. Sixteen volumes of the American Stud Book, published by the Jockey Club, have been issued.

STANDARD BRED

The Standardbred (fig. 3) is an American breed developed primarily for extreme speed at the trot and pace. American Trotting Horse is another name for this breed. Messenger, an imported Thoroughbred stallion, and imported Bellfounder, registered in the English Hackney Stud Book, were largely responsible for the foundation of this breed, as Rysdyk's Hambletonian, a stallion to which a vast majority of the horses of this breed trace, carried the blood of both. The ancestry of the pacer is not different from that of the trotter, but today some families produce a much larger proportion of pacers than others, while some individuals show speed at both gaits. Both trotters and pacers are registered in the same studbook.

Horses of this breed generally do not show so much quality as the Thoroughbred but usually have more substance, being heavier in proportion to their height. The ears, head, and bone particularly are larger, and the hind legs are not quite so straight as in the Thoroughbred. In weight the Standardbred ranges from 900 to 1,300 pounds, and in height from 15 to 16 hands. The best specimens are often about 15.2 hands high and weigh about 1,100 pounds when in good driving condition.

These horses are bred pure largely with the intention of producing extreme trotting or pacing speed for racing purposes. Individuals not having the required racing speed have frequently been able to fill utility places on account of their size, endurance, and good disposition. This is equally true of those carrying half or more Standardbred blood. They have been used in large numbers as general-purpose farm horses; they predominate as roadsters, or driving horses, and as light delivery-wagon horses. Occasionally excellent heavy-harness horses have been

trotting bred. Durable cavalry horses frequently carry this blood. When of sufficient size, horses of this blood are the best light-artillery horses coming from a known source to be found in this country in considerable numbers. On account of their versatility, horses of trotting-bred ancestry have been very popular here, and foreign countries have paid some very attractive prices for Standardbred breeding stock, especially stallions.

The United States Trotting Association, of which Will Gahagan, Goshen, N. Y., is registrar, promotes the interest of the Standardbred and records purebred animals. Twenty-nine volumes of the studbook of this association have been issued, and more than 200,000 animals have been recorded.



FIGURE 3.—Standardbred stallion.

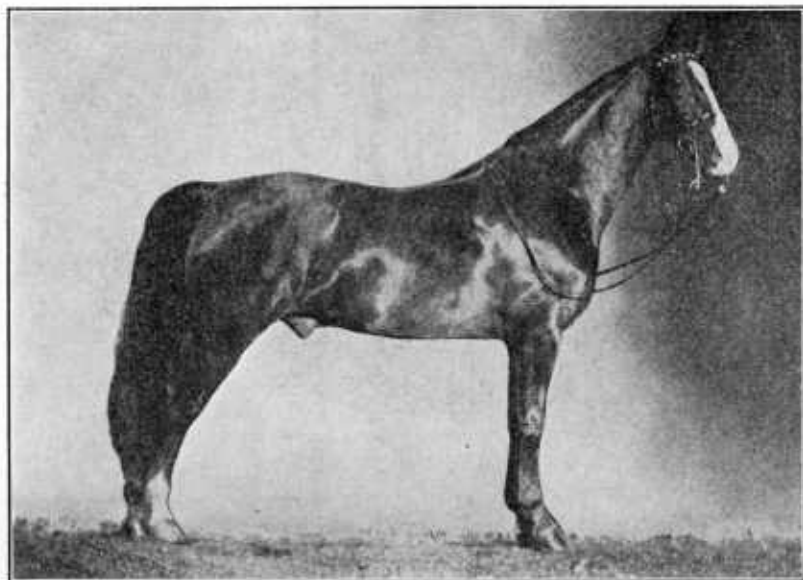
AMERICAN SADDLE HORSE

The early residents of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia found horses with easy gaits to be the most desirable to ride over plantations and semimountainous grazing farms and on long journeys. Preferring such gaits, they laid the foundation for and promoted the pioneer development of the American Saddle Horse. Sections of Missouri also soon took up the breeding of easy-gaited saddle horses, and today this State ranks next to the mother State, Kentucky, in the production of high-class horses of this breed.

Thoroughbred, Morgan, and Canadian bloods form the basis for this breed. The American Saddle Horse Breeders' Association

recognized the following horses as foundation stock of the breed previous to April 10, 1908: Denmark, by Imported Hedgeford; John Dillard; Brinker's Drennon; Sam Booker; Tom Hal; Coleman's Eureka; Van Meter's Waxy; Cabell's Lexington; Copperbottom; Stump-the-Dealer; Texas; Prince Albert; Peter's Haleorn; Varnon's Roebuck; and Davy Crockett. At present, Denmark alone is recognized as foundation stock.

The chief distinguishing characteristics of the American Saddle Horse (fig. 4) are the gaits known as the rack, or single-foot, a rather fast, cultivated gait intermediate in movement between the trot and the pace; the fox trot; the running walk; and the slow pace. The last three are commonly referred to as the slow gaits, any one of which



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FIGURE 4.—American Saddle Horse gelding.

is accepted as the slow gait of a five-gaited saddle horse. The other gaits demanded in a horse of this type are the canter, the trot, and the walk. The demand for harness, combination, and walk-trot-canter saddle horses has caused many dealers and breeders to pay particular attention to the development of a balanced, fairly high, and swift trot.

Horses of this breed are usually bay, brown, chestnut, or black, and most of them stand from 15 to 16 hands high and weigh from 1,000 to 1,200 pounds.

The breeders of Kentucky and Missouri have always manifested much interest in showing their horses and colts at county and State fairs, and this undoubtedly is responsible in large measure for the constant selection in this breed for animals with a great deal of quality, unusual style, and fine disposition. Fine harness show horses frequently possess saddle blood. Those without the easy gaits but with quality and desirable saddle conformation are sold as three-gaited saddle horses

for park and show purposes. Heavy harness horses have occasionally come from this breed. Five-gaited saddle horses seldom come from any other blood. American Saddle Horses are being bred pure in practically every State in the Union, and many are sold to Cuba and to other countries.

The American Saddle Horse Breeders' Association, the organization recording purebred animals of this breed, reports that 17,905 stallions and 29,714 mares have been registered. Twenty volumes of the studbook have been issued. Charles J. Cronan, Jr., 204-6 Urban Building, Louisville, Ky., is secretary of the association.

MORGAN

The Morgan has sometimes been considered a family of the Standardbred, but as these horses have been bred more for their utility qualities than for speed and as their characteristics are well established and perpetuated with marked regularity, it is proper to consider them a distinct breed. The early development of the Morgan took place in New England. Thus this country has the credit of founding three light breeds. The foundation of the Morgan breed is attributed to a single stallion, Justin Morgan, a horse of remarkable prepotency. Very little is definitely known of his ancestry. One investigator collected evidence showing that Justin Morgan was sired by the Thoroughbred stallion True Briton, also called Beautiful Bay, a horse that traced in direct male line to The Byerly Turk and had many other traces of Arabian blood. Another investigator contends that he was sired by a Dutch horse which, in turn, came from Arabian stock. Which of these hypotheses is correct is not important today. The presence of only five lumbar vertebrae in many Morgans points to Arabian foundation.

Morgans are generally chestnut, brown, bay, or black, white marks being uncommon. Fifteen and a half hands is the average height of good individuals, and the average weight is about 1,050 pounds, but, as in all breeds, considerable variation is found. This breed has always been noted for smooth lines, good style, easy-keeping qualities, endurance, and docility, the last, however, not being obtained at a sacrifice of ambition and courage. Small ears, good eyes, with great width between them, crested necks, well-sprung ribs, with the last one close to the point of the hip, deep barrels, fairly level croups, full quarters, and enduring legs and feet are the qualities that have made Morgan horses popular for a century. They have good natural knee action, with considerable speed at the trot, some families having contributed materially to the upbuilding of the Standardbred. Others showing more saddle characteristics have exerted a marked influence on the American Saddle Horse. A Morgan stallion is shown in figure 5.

These horses were used almost exclusively as general-purpose farm horses in New England in the early days, as well as in other sections. Today Morgans are distributed in small numbers over the important farming sections of this country and have made for themselves a reputation for hardiness, soundness, and usefulness.

Though the craze for trotting speed and the subsequent lack of demand for driving horses nearly resulted in the Morgan's being temporarily forgotten, his friends have never lost faith in him and

have never missed an opportunity to exploit his good qualities. Recently Morgan breeding has become quite popular in some sections, the Morgan Horse Club being an outcome of this movement. Through united effort of its members, this club is endeavoring to preserve the good qualities of the Morgan. This work is analogous to that of the Department of Agriculture in regenerating the breed at the United States Morgan Horse Farm, Middlebury, Vt.

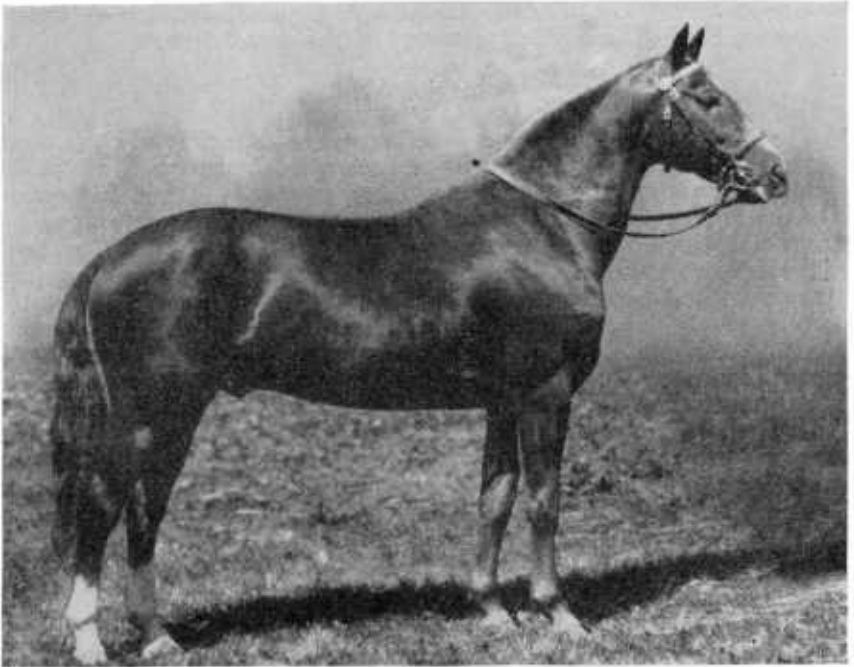


FIGURE 5.—Morgan stallion.

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The Morgan Horse Club, Inc., publishes the American Morgan Horse Register. Five volumes have been published, recording approximately 8,200 stallions and 5,400 mares. F. B. Hills, 90 Broad Street, New York, N. Y., is the secretary.

HACKNEY

The first driving horses used in England of which much is known were the Norfolk trotters. These horses resulted largely from breeding Norfolk mares to Thoroughbred stallions, and are the foundation for the Hackney breed.

Judged by its best individuals, this breed presents a striking illustration of the high degree to which the horse-breeding art may be developed, for many of them are wonderful specimens of horse flesh, combining extremely high all-round trotting action and fair speed with abundant substance and quality. For showing in heavy harness the Hackney is without a close rival; in fact, most of the show horses of this class belong to this breed. Purebred and grade Hackneys

also furnished many of the utility carriage horses when this type was in demand. Crossed with trotting-bred mares, Hackney stallions have sired many high-class carriage horses in this country. Most of the demand at present for heavy harness horses is for show purposes, and to meet this demand Hackneys are usually bred pure. A Hackney stallion is shown in figure 6.

The versatility of the Hackney is illustrated by the fact that many successful hunters and jumpers are half-bred Hackneys. The

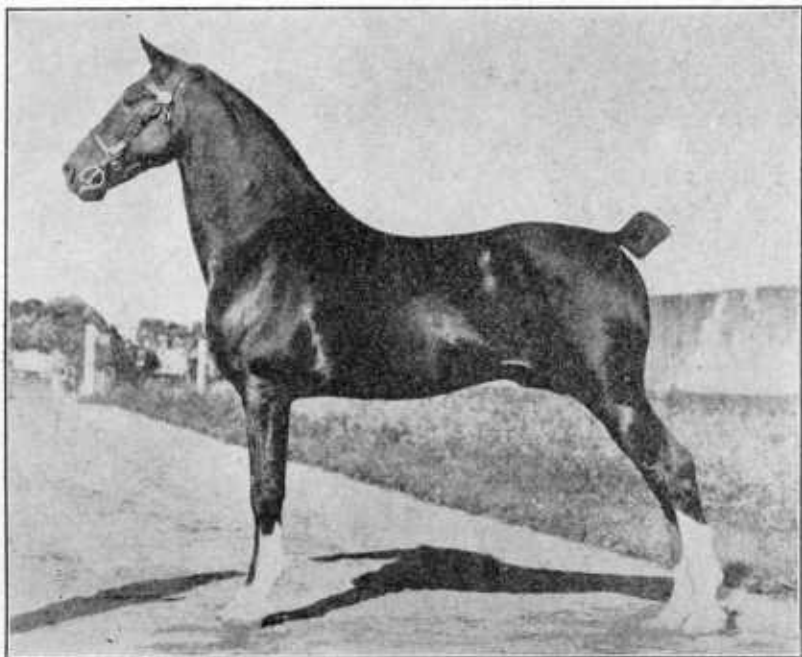


FIGURE 6.—Hackney stallion.

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world's record-holding high jumper, Great Heart, with a record of 8 feet $\frac{1}{16}$ inch, was sired by a registered Hackney, as was the previous holder of that record, Confidence.

Chestnut, bay, and brown are the most common colors found in the Hackney breed, although there are roans and blacks. Regular white marks are rather common. In the show ring and also for distinctive carriage use, Hackneys are usually docked and have their manes pulled. In size the Hackney varies more than any other light breed. The small Hackney pony, 14.2 hands and under, and the 16-hand Hackney horse are registered in the same studbook. Hackneys are heavy in proportion to their height when compared with other light breeds, their deep chests, well-sprung ribs, low flanks, and heavy croups and quarters producing weight. The large Hackney sometimes is lacking in general quality, but this is not true of the best specimens and certainly would not be a just criticism of those standing about 14.2 to 15 hands.

While, as previously stated, the Hackney possesses desirable heavy-harness action to a greater degree than any other breed, much of this action is developed by skilled training, biting, and shoeing.

The association in this country devoted to the interests of the Hackney breed is the American Hackney Horse Society, of which Gurney C. Gue, Merriek, N. Y., is secretary. This society publishes the American Hackney Stud Book, in which more than 2,500 stallions and 4,300 mares have been recorded.

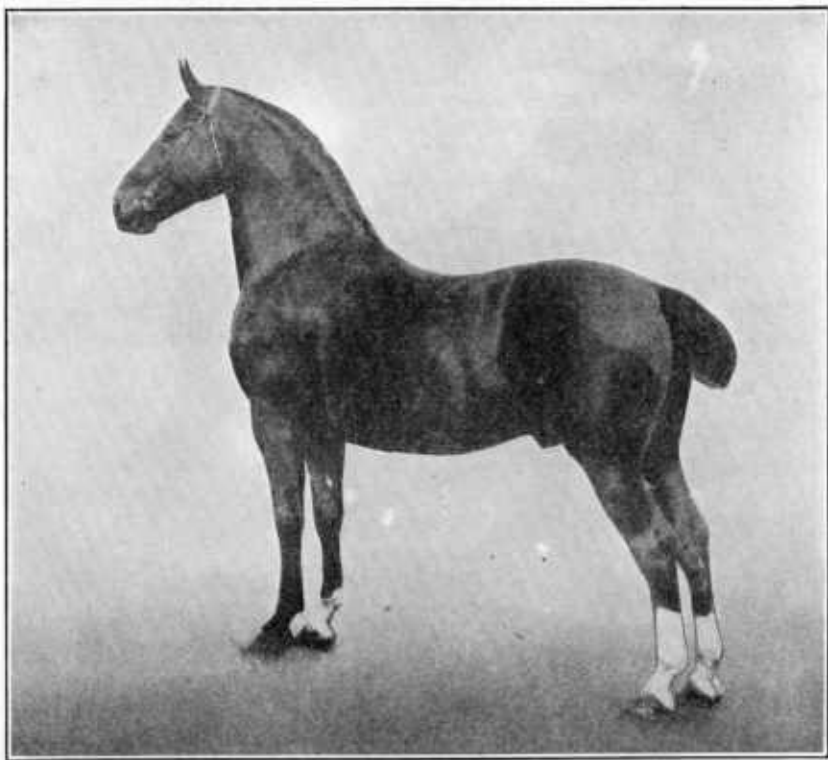


FIGURE 7.- French Coach stallion.

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FRENCH COACH

The name French Coach is used in the United States for a breed of horses produced in France largely by Government aid and with the special object of obtaining animals well suited for military purposes. In their native country such horses are not known as French Coach but as Demi-Sang (half-bred). In the United States the term "half-bred" is applied to horses of half or more Thoroughbred blood, and as the French use the term in a similar sense it furnishes an idea of the ancestry of this breed, which is largely the result of crossing Thoroughbred stallions on mares of desirable conformation, their breeding being of minor consideration.

This system of breeding often resulted in an animal of beautiful conformation, with size, substance, style, and quality. In their

selection of breeding stock for producing this class of horse, the French have laid a great deal of emphasis on a strong, enduring trot.

While the French Coach horse (fig. 7) is not so large on an average as the German Coach, many French Coach horses stand 15.3 to 16 hands and weigh 1,100 to 1,300 pounds; there is, however, considerable deviation from these measurements. These horses are generally bay or brown, but some are chestnut or black. White marks are not common and are rarely extensive.

During former years French Coach horses appealed strongly to the American importer, with the result that stallions especially were brought to this country in considerable numbers. As a harness horse, it has been very commendable, and some of the get of French Coach stallions have been successful in prominent shows. On account of their mixed ancestry, however, French Coach stallions do not always produce the kind of colts that would be expected when crossed on our mares. Lately, very few French Coach horses have been imported into the United States, and the pure breeding of this stock in this country is very limited.

The French Coach Horse Society of America has kept records of purebred horses of this breed in the United States. Two volumes of the French Coach Stud Book have been issued, and 2,384 stallions and 840 mares have been recorded. Recently the society appears to have been inactive and its officers are not known to the Department.

GERMAN COACH

Germany, with the object of producing a large, strong, active horse that would be especially well adapted to carrying the German soldier and his heavy equipment and to hauling artillery, established the breed of horses known in this country as the German Coach (fig. 8). In Germany there are several distinct breeds of such horses, each of which is registered in a separate studbook.

The German Coach horse is said to have an infusion of Thoroughbred blood, but present-day types do not show much of it. According to American standards, the German Coach horse lacks quality and is considered the most phlegmatic of the light breeds. It is also the heaviest of the light breeds, such horses often weighing over 1,400 pounds and standing over 16 hands high. Very few specimens of this breed show a tendency to good trappy action, and practically no attempt has been made to produce a fast trot. In color this breed is quite desirable, most of the horses being a rich bay or brown, though some are black. White marks are seldom conspicuous and often are absent altogether. As a general-purpose farm horse and as a heavy harness horse the German Coach at one time gained some popularity in this country, but in general the stallions did not nick well with our mares, and their use has been practically discontinued.

The German, Hanoverian, and Oldenburg Coach Horse Association of America, for a number of years, promoted the interests of this breed in the United States and issued registration papers for German Coach horses of approved breeding. Recently the association appears to have become inactive. G. R. Crouch, La Fayette, Ind., is the last secretary of whom the Department has record.

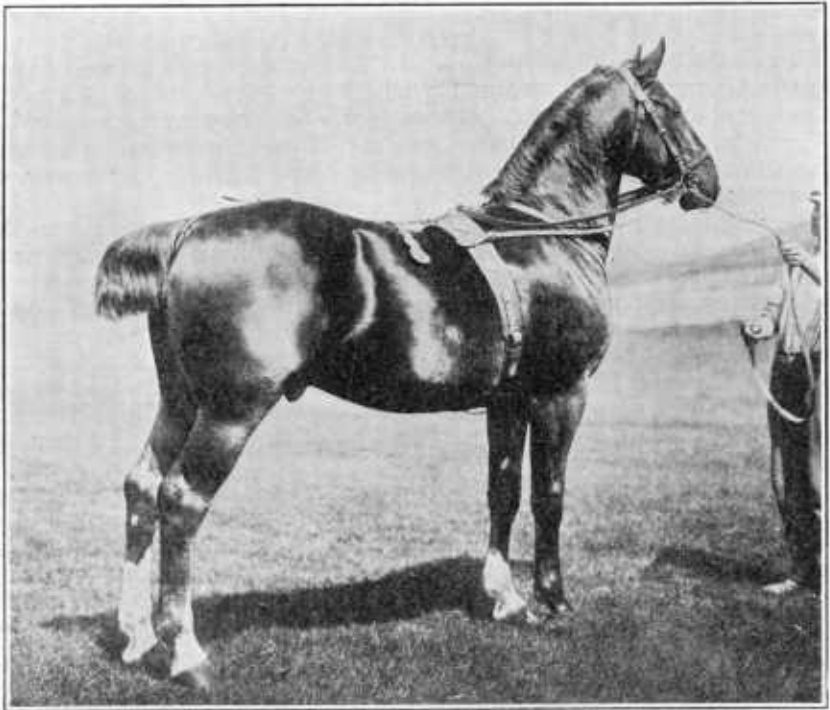


FIGURE 8.—German Coach stallion.

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CLEVELAND BAY

The Cleveland Bay breed takes its name from the Cleveland district of Yorkshire, England, where it originated, and from its body color, which is invariably solid bay. The legs, mane, and tail are black. White markings, when present, are confined to a small star on the forehead. The breed is derived from the old Yorkshire Pack, or Chapman Horse, which was used in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before roads were good enough to permit the utilization of wagons to transport heavy packs of merchandise. During the second half of the eighteenth century a small proportion of Thoroughbred blood was introduced into this breed. The Cleveland Bay is the oldest existing breed of general-purpose horse suitable for riding, driving, and general farm work, and records of its pedigree in many lines run back to as early as 1700.

In type the Cleveland Bay generally resembles the Thoroughbred, but it has greater substance and power. The ideal Cleveland Bay is characterized by a well-set head; long neck; good withers and slope of shoulders; a deep chest and a large heart girth; short legs; large knees, hocks, and tendons; flat cannon bone; big but not clumsy feet; good coupling and spring of ribs; and long, level hindquarters. In the past the Cleveland Bay has been criticized because of a plain head and long back—derived from its pack-horse ancestry—but these faults have now been virtually eliminated by selective breeding. Cleveland Bays stand from 16 to 17 hands and weigh from 1,350 to 1,550 pounds;



FIGURE 9.—Cleveland Bay stallion.

they are noted for their fast walk and general activity, for their ability to stand hot weather, and for their quiet dispositions. Owners say that these horses can be maintained on relatively small quantities of feed. Figure 9 shows a Cleveland Bay stallion.

Cleveland Bays were imported into this country as early as 1820. The Cleveland Bay Society of America was organized in 1885 and has published three volumes of a studbook, the last in 1907, in which are registered 1,280 stallions and 550 mares. During this period, from 1885 to 1907, Cleveland Bays were used chiefly as general-purpose horses, for driving, and for farm work. With the advent of the automobile it was thought that the demand for the general-purpose horse would cease, and consequently registrations were not kept up.

In recent years some Cleveland Bays have been imported into the United States for two purposes—first to cross with Thoroughbreds, particularly mares, to get heavyweight hunters, a method which has been used with marked success in both England and this country for over 150 years, and, second, to cross them with heavy draft mares to produce an active type of farm horse with a fast walk, resistance to heat, quiet disposition, and small feed requirements. The secretary of the Cleveland Bay Association of America is A. Mackay Smith, White Post, Va.

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